

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 02812 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN BEIRUT
TEL AVIV TRIPOLI, MARCH 9 TH:

QUOTE

S E C R E T LONDON 02812

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DEPT PASS CAIRO

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: EGYPT THROUGH A PROFESSOR' S EYES

SUMMARY: EGYPTOLOGIST PROFESSOR BRIEFED US AFTER RECENT
TRIP TO EGYPT RE EGYPTIAN DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS
WITH US, ASPECTS OF ME SETTLEMENT, AND INTERNAL
DYNAMICS OF SADAT REGIME. END SUMMARY

1. ON MARCH 8 WE HAD LUNCH WITH LONDON EGYPTOLOGIST
PROFESSOR P. J. VATIKIOTIS. THOUGH SOMETIMES INDULGING
IN HYPERBOLE, VATIKIOTIS HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS AND LONG
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BACKGROUND IN AREA. HE RECENTLY SPENT OVER A MONTH IN EGYPT. WE NOTE SOME OF HIS IMPRESSIONS BELOW.

2. EGYPTIANS DESPERATELY WANT GOOD RELATIONS WITH US AGAIN. THIS IS QUITE APART FROM QUESTION OF ME SETTLEMENT. THEY WANT USG AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT VERY BADLY. SOME CITE EXAMPLE OF PAPADOPOULOS REGIME IN GREECE AS WORTHY OF EMULATION (N. B. JUST AS PAPADOPOULOS STARTED OFF SAYING HE DESIRED TO EMULATE NASSER).

3. MEMORY OF US IN PAST IS COMPARED FAVORABLY WITH SOVIETS. MANY ASK WHAT SOVIETS HAVE GIVEN EGYPT. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO " FALLOUT" ECONOMICALLY FROM SOVIET ACTIVITIES THERE. QUITE SURPRISINGLY, ASWAN DAM HAS FADED FROM CONVERSATION. EGYPTIANS AWARE OF ITS SIDE EFFECTS, SUCH AS SILT DISAPPEARING FROM NILE VALLEY, REQUIRING MASSIVE AND CONTINUING PROVISION OF ARTIFICIAL FERTILIZER. EGYPTIANS NO LONGER SEEM PROUD OF DAM OR OTHER ECONOMIC " ACCOMPLISHMENTS" OF NASSER PERIOD. ONLY 650,000 WORKERS EMPLOYED IN INDUSTRY. RISING EXPECTATIONS OF LOWER BOURGEOISIE HAVE BEEN STIRRED UP BUT ARE NOT BEING MET. LAND REFORM BENEFITED MAINLY THOSE WITH ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY THEMSELVES SOME LAND; MANY OF THEM ARE MILITARY OFFICERS. PEASANTS RELATIVELY WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE. STUDENT DEMANDS ARE NOT BEING MET, AND STUDENTS RELATIVELY EASY TO SUPPRESS; EDUCATION SUFFERS.

4. VATIKIOTIS HAS IMPRESSION NO- WAR- NO- PEACE SITUATION SUITS PRESENT RULING ELITE VERY WELL. THEY ARE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THEIR OWN WELL- BEING. VATIKIOTIS RECALLS HAVING MADE THIS POINT TO DAYAN DURING ONE OF DAYAN' S VISITS TO BRITAIN. (THIS IS POINT MADE ALSO BY DAVID HIRST IN CURRENT SERIES OF EXTREMELY FRANK ARTICLES IN THE GUARDIAN, ALREADY POUCHED. VATIKIOTIS REACTION TO HIRST IS THAT HE IS WRITING OLD HAT, WELL KNOWN VERITIES).

5. KEY REASON SADAT AND PRESENT ASSOCIATES UNLIKELY REACH SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL, IN VATIKIOTIS' S OPINION, IS THEIR CONTINUING EMOTIONAL INABILITY TO VISUALIZE PRESENCE OF JEWISH STATE IN MIDDLE EAST. QUESTIONS OF ITS EXTENT AND BOUNDARIES ARE SECONDARY. ATTITUDE
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TOWARD JEWS TAUGHT IN KORAN RELEVANT HERE. (WE ASSUME

THIS POINT TOO WAS REPORTED BY VATIKIOTIS TO ISRAELI
EMBOFF HERE WHO CULTIVATES HIM.)

6. VATIKIOTIS SPENT 16 OR 17 HOURS IN COMPANY OF
AHAM EDITOR HEIKAL. HEIKAL DENIED HE IS OUT OF CONTACT
WITH REGIME, PICKED UP PHONE ON HIS DESK, AND LET
VATIKIOTIS HEAR SADAT'S VOICE COMING ON AT OTHER END OF
DIRECT LINE BEFORE HE SPOKE TO SADAT ABOUT SOMETHING.
HEIKAL SAYS HE HAS PROMISED SADAT NOT TO WRITE HISTORY
OF NASSER FOCUSING ON DOMESTIC POLICY FOR 10 YEARS (PRE-
SUMABLY BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT REFLECT FAVORABLY ON SADAT
OR CURRENT GOE). IN REPLY TO PUBLISHED VATIKIOTIS
CRITICISM OF ABSENCE DOCUMENTATION IN HEIKAL'S BOOK ON
NASSER AND FOREIGN POLICY, HEIKAL APPARENTLY THREW OPEN
SERIES OF CLOSETS CRAMMED WITH PAPERS TO IMPRESS HIM.
ANYWAY, HEIKAL TOLD VATIKIOTIS, HE WAS IMMUNE FROM
PURGING SINCE HE HAS BECOME TOO WELL KNOWN IN EGYPT AND
ABROAD.

7. AS TO QADHAFI, INFLUENTIAL EGYPTIANS ARE APPREHEN-
SIVE. THEY ARE CERTAIN HE WOULD WANT TO BECOME TOP MAN
IN ANY UNION, AND MIGHT WELL SUCCEED. THERE IS DOUBT AS
TO HOW MUCH OF LIBYA'S MONEY EGYPT WOULD GET OUT OF
UNION. THERE IS ALSO FEAR OF ENTERING SITUATION " LIKE
THE YEMEN", IN SENSE TRIPOLITANIANS AND BEDOUINS, PERHAPS
SUPPORTED BY OTHER NORTH AFRICAN ARABS, MIGHT RESIST
INTEGRATION INTO EGYPT FORCIBLY.

8. MEN REPORTEDLY CLOSEST TO SADAT AT PRESENT, ACCORDING
TO VATIKIOTIS, ARE THREE: MIRWAN, AN AIDE DE CAMP HE
INHERITED, AND A BODYGUARD. NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER
HAFEZ ISMAIL (WHOSE CUSTOMARY SILENCE DOES NOT HIDE
ANY PARTICULAR BRILLIANCE, ACCORDING TO VATIKIOTIS) IS
BEING USED AS A FOIL TO KEEP PRIME MINISTER SIDKY IN
LINE. ZAYYAT'S APPOINTMENT TO FOREIGN MINISTER AMOUNTED
IN REALITY TO A DEMOTION FROM INFLUENCE.

9. COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT PROFESSOR VATIKIOTIS PUTS
HIS VIEWS SHARPLY. HE IS A CONTROVERSIALIST, BUT ONE
WELL VERSED IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY WHICH HE LEFT
AT AN EARLY AGE. WE SUBMIT THE IDEAS ARE STIMULATING.

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